

# **Patient Information - Foot Surgery**

## **Foot Surgery**

### **Surgery and Critical Care**

Darent Valley Hospital

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[www.dgt.nhs.uk](http://www.dgt.nhs.uk)

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### **About your operation**

Foot surgery covers everything from straightening and amputation of toes, to the removal of screws, nails, nerves and ingrowing toenails. Much of the surgery is performed by Orthopaedic Surgeons and usually under general anaesthetic, but general surgeons may operate on the foot especially ingrowing toenails and some procedures may be performed under a local anaesthetic.

Most sutures, if appropriate, will need to stay in place until you are seen in the outpatient's clinic usually about 2 weeks after your operation.

### **What should I do before my operation?**

Now your Consultant has agreed with you to undergo this procedure it is important to follow the advice on your admission letter and that given by the Pre-Admission Assessment Nurse and the booklet you have been provided with.

You should refrain from smoking and drinking alcohol for 48 hours prior to your operation. Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do to improve your surgical outcomes and future health. Darent Valley and Queen Mary Hospitals are smoke free sites. If you are experiencing nicotine withdrawal symptoms whilst in our care, please ask staff about nicotine replacement therapy to keep you comfortable, and a referral to your local NHS stop smoking service.

Please follow the pre-operative fasting instructions given by the pre-admission nurse specifically for day surgical procedures to aid recovery.

### **What is a local anaesthetic?**

If your operation is possible to be performed whilst you are awake, injections of local anaesthetic and painkillers will be given around the operation site to numb the area. This may last for 2-4 hours.

### **After a general anaesthetic, what arrangements do I need to make?**

Even though you may feel quite normal, there is a period following a general anaesthetic or sedation in which your judgement, performance and reaction are impaired. Therefore, it is important that a friend or relative must collect you from the hospital. Unless identified prior to admission as someone who is suitable to be at home alone, you must have someone to stay with you for the next 24 hours. If you are unable to provide a suitable carer, your operation may be postponed or cancelled.

You must not drive yourself home, or travel by public transport. You may use a taxi with your escort. Due to the effects, you should not drink alcohol, drive a car, ride a bicycle, operate machinery, use electrical equipment, sign legal documents or do anything particularly dangerous for 24 hours. Smoking may cause dizziness and is discouraged.

### **What do I need to bring in with me to hospital on the day of my operation?**

Dressing gown and slippers and if you have any suitable comfortable trousers, i.e. tracksuit or jogging trousers and something to read. Remove as much jewellery as possible and leave it at home. Please do not bring large amounts of money or debit/credit cards into hospital. The Trust is not responsible for valuables. For health and safety, reasons please remove any false nails, nail varnish and make up.

### **Relatives, Friends and Carers**

We request that all visitors leave the unit once the patient has been dropped off, unless there is a specific clinical or mental health need which needs to be identified to the nurses. The reason for this is that we promote single sex accommodation for all of our patients.

### **Pain Relief and side effects**

Please follow the pain relief advice leaflet given by your pre- assessment nurse. During your anaesthetic, you will be given pain-relieving medicines and anti-sickness medication. After your operation, your nurse will give you more pain relief medication as necessary. Do not let your pain build up and please tell the nurse if you are experiencing pain. Please ensure you have a stock of your usual painkillers at home.

If you are feeling nausea, please let the nurse looking after you know. They can then provide you with further medication to help with this.

You may feel some discomfort and swelling after your operation. This is normal and will reduce over the next few days.

## **What do I need to do after the operation?**

A wool and crepe bandage is applied to the leg over the small dressings. Each Orthopaedic Consultant has minor individual preferences as to care following surgery and you will be given advice sheets as appropriate. Generally, you will be able to remove the wool and crepe bandages yourself after 24 - 48 hours following surgery, leaving the small dressings in place until you are seen in clinic for the removal of sutures.

## **Wound Management**

After most orthopaedic surgery, you will need to keep your bandages and dressings in place and dry until you are seen in the outpatient's clinic. Each Consultant has their own protocol. Your nurse will give you advice should your dressings need to be changed sooner. However, if you have any concerns i.e. oozing or swelling please see your GP or seek alternative advice. You should keep your foot/feet up on a stool and/or pillows to reduce the risk of swelling or bleeding and should not cross your legs.

## **How long will I need time off work?**

This will depend on what work you do and the type of surgery you have had. If necessary, a medical certificate will be issued by the surgeons on request. You will also be advised on sporting and recreational activities. You must not drive until you have no bandages, all sutures are removed and you are completely pain free.

It may be necessary for you to have crutches to help you walk. Your nurse or physiotherapist will show you how to use them safely. You will be given written information on their use, and you will be asked to sign for their loan

## **Who do I contact if I have any problems?**

If you are anxious about your condition, do not be afraid to ask for advice, however small your worry may seem. If you feel unwell, this could be the anaesthetic affecting you and your GP will be able to help you. If it is problems with circulation, "pins and needles" sensation, numbness, cold, colour changes, swelling or bleeding please contact either:

- If you were a patient at Darent Valley Hospital , please telephone 01322 428100 and ask for the ward you was discharged from.
- If you were a patient at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, please telephone 0208 302 2678 Telephone your G.P. or Practice Nurse
- Telephone 111

We hope your stay with us was pleasant, but if are dissatisfied with any aspect of your care, please contact the Ward Manager.

**This leaflet has been developed in partnership with the Patient Information Group and our DGT Patient Partners**

## **Patient Information**

Further patient leaflets are available from the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust website: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets> Please ask a member of staff if you require information in another language or format.

## **Complaints, Comments, Concerns and Compliments**

Please speak to the staff in the ward or department caring for you if you have any concerns or questions relating to your care or that of a loved one.

Compliments can be shared by visiting: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/contact-us/compliments>

Alternatively, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01322 428382 Email: [dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

# Patient Property

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuable items into the hospital. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property unless it is handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust operate smoke-free hospitals. This means that smoking is not permitted anywhere on hospital grounds. For help to quit smoking please visit [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/)

Use of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted anywhere on the hospital site. For drug and alcohol support please speak to your nurse or doctor or

Visit: [www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help](http://www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help)

Call: 0330 128 1113

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